



BIOGRAPHY

Inpanh Thavonekham

BIRTHPLACE

Inpanh Thavonekham was born in Atapeu, in Southern Laos.

CHILDHOOD

Mr. Thavonekham was ten when he and his family moved to the city of Vientiane, Laos. He and his family then fled Laos in 1979 for a refugee camp in Thailand. In 1980, he came to Des Moines. His first interest in the arts was in music. His two teachers taught him the khene, pronounced *ken*. He learned to play many instruments by ear. He learned by watching others and by experimenting.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Mr. Thavonekham attended the Lao National Art Institute from 1975 to 1979, and studied painting and wood carving.

POSITION

Mr. Thavonekham plays music for the Natasinh dance troupe in Des Moines, Iowa. He was named a Master Artist in the Iowa Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program of the American Folklife Center. Previously he made costumes at the Des Moines Theatrical Shop.

INSPIRATION/INFLUENCE

Two teachers, Langsy and Khamman, influenced Inpanh Thavonekham as a student. He is influenced by his culture, and created a painting that reflects many aspects of his life in Laos—the buildings, animals, and color palette.

ART FORM

Inpanh Thavonekham is a painter, woodcarver, and costume maker, and has created musical instruments. His works include relief carvings of Buddhist images, dragons, and birds. His painting reflects the Laotian culture and landscape.

WEB SITE

www.kennedy-center.org/programs/millennium/artist_detail.cfm?artist_id=THAVONEKHA

ARTWORK DISPLAYED

Wat Lao Buddhavath Temple, Des Moines, Iowa